THE FIRST AND LARGE PETITION OF THE CITY OF LONDON

and of other Inhabitants thereabouts

For a reformation in Church-government, as also for the abolishment of EPISCOPACY.

WITH

A REMONSTRANCE

thereto annexed, of the many Pressures and Grievances occasioned by the Bishops, and the sundry inconveniences incident to Episcopacy.

THE TYRANNY AND EXTORTION

practised in Ecclesiasticall Courts, together with the unlawfulnesse of the Oath Ex Officio: preferred to the High and Honourable Court of PARLIAMENT.

Printed Anno Dom. 1641.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

THE HVMBLE PETITION of many of his Majesties Subjects in and about the City of London, and severall Counties of the Kingdom.

HAt whereas the government of Archbishops, and Lord Bishops, Deanes, and Archdeacons, &c. with their severe and unlimited tions in them hath proved prejudiciall and very dangerous both to the Church and Common-wealth, they themselves having formerly held, that they have their jurisdiction or authority of humane authority, till of these later times being further

peruſed about the unlawfulneſſe that they have claimed their calling immediately from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is againſt the Lawes of this Kingdome, and derogatory to his Majeſty, and his State Royall. And whereas the ſaid government is found by wofull experience, to be a maine cauſe and occaſion of many foule evills, preſſures and grievances of a very high nature unto his Majeſties ſubjects, in their owne conſciences, liberties and eſtates; as in a Schedule of particulars hereunto annexed may in part appeare.

We therefore moſt humbly pray and beſeech this honourable Aſſembly, the premiſſes conſidered, that the ſaid government with all its dependances, rootes and branches may bee aboliſhed, and all lawes in their behalfe made voide, and the government according to Gods word, may be rightly placed among us; and wee your humble Suppliants as in duty we are bound, will daily pray for his Majeſties long and happy raigne over us, and for the proſperous ſucceſſe of this high and Honourable Court of Parliament, &c.

A Particular of the manifold Evils, Pressures and Grievances, caused, practised and occasioned by the Prelates and their Dependants.

I.

FIrst, the subjecting and inclining all Ministers under them and their Authority, and so by degrees exempting of them from the Temporall power, whence followes:

II.

The faint-heartednesse of Ministers to preach the truth of GOD, lest they should displease the Prelates, as namely, *the Doctrine of Predestination, of Free-grace, of Perseverance, of Originall sinne remaining after Baptisme, of the Sabbath, the Doctrine against universall Grace, Election, for faith fore-seene, Free-will, against Antichrist, Non-residents, humane Inventions of GODS worship:* All which are generally with-held from the peoples knowledge, because not relishing to the Bishops.

III.

The incouragement of Ministers to despise the Temporall Magistracie, the Nobles, and Gentry of the Land, to abuse the Subjects, and live contentiously with their neighbours, knowing that they being the Bishops creatures, they shall be supported.

IV.

The restraint of many godly and able men from the Ministery, and thrusting out of many Congregations their faithful, diligent and powerfull Ministers, who lived peaceably with them, and did them good, onely because they cannot in conscience submit unto, and maintaine the Bishops needlesse devices; nay sometimes for no other cause but for their zeale in preaching, or great Auditories.

V.

The suppressing of that Godly designe set on foot by certaine Sects, and furthered with many great gifts by sundry well-affected persons, for the buying of Impropriations, and placing of able Ministers in them, maintaining of Lectures, and founding of Free-schooles; which the Prelates could not endure, lest it should darken their glories, and draw the Ministers from their dependance upon them.

VI.

The great increase of Idle, lewd, and diſſolute, ignorant and erroneous men in the Miniſtery, which ſwarme like the Locuſts of Egypt over the whole Kingdome: and will they but weare a Canonicall Coate, a Surpliſſe, a Hood, bow at the Name of Jeſus, and be zealous of Superſtitious Ceremonies, they may live as they liſt, confront whom they pleaſe, preach and vent what errours they will, and neglect preaching at their pleaſures, without controule.

VII.

The diſcouragement of many from bringing up their Children in Learning, the many ſchiſmes, errours, and ſtrange opinions which are in the Church, great corruptions, which are in the Univerſities, the groſſe and lamentable ignorance almoſt every where among the people, the want of preaching Miniſters in very many places both of England and Wales the loathing of the Miniſtery, and the generall defection to all manner of profanenesſe.

VIII.

The ſwarming of laſcivious, idle, and unprofitable Books and Pamphlets, Play-bookes, and Ballads, as namely, *Ovids* fits of Love, the Parliament of Women came out at the diſſolving of the laſt Parliament, *Barnes* Poems, *Parkers* Ballads in diſgrace of Religion,

gion, to the increaſe of all vice, and withdrawing of people from reading, ſtudying, and hearing the Word of God, and other good Bookes.

IX.

The hindring of godly Books to be printed, the blotting out or perverting thoſe which they ſuffer, all or moſt of that which ſtrikes either at Popery, or Arminianiſme, the adding of what or where pleaſeth them, and the reſtraints of reprinting Bookes formerly licenſed, without relicenſing.

X.

The publiſhing and venting of Popiſh, Arminian, and other dangerous Bookes and Tenets, as namely, that the Church of Rome is a true Church, and in the worſt times never erred in Fundamentals, that the Subjects have no propriety in their Eſtates, but that the King may take from them what he pleaſeth, that all is the Kings, and that he is bound by no Law, and many other, from the former whereof hath ſprung.

XI.

The growth of Popery, and increaſe of Papiſts, Prieſts and Jeſuites in ſundry places, but eſpecially about London ſince the Reformation, the frequent venting of Crucifixes and Popiſh pictures both engraven and printed, and the placing of ſuch in Bibles.

The multitude of *Monopolies* and *Patents*, drawing with them innumerable Penuries, the large increase of Customes and Impositions upon *Commodities*, the *Ship-moneys* and many other great burthens upon the *Common-wealth*, under which all groane.

XIII.

Moreover, the Offices and Jurisdictions of *Arch-bishops*, *Lord-bishops*, *Deanes*, *Arch-Deacons*, being the same way of *Church-Government* which is in the *Romish Church*, and which was in *England* in the time of *Poperie*, little change thereof being made (except only the head from whence it was derived) the same Arguments supporting the Pope, which do uphold the *Prelates*, and overthrowing the *Prelates*, which do pull down the Pope & other reformed *Churches* having upon their rejection of the Pope, cast the Prelates out also as Members of the Beast: Hence it is, that the Prelates here in *England* by themselves or their Disciples plead and maintain that the Pope is not *Antichrist*, and that the *Church of Rome* is a true *Church*, hath not erred in Fundamentall points, and that Salvation is attaynable in that Religion, and therefore have refrayned to pray for the Conversion of our Sovetain Lady the Queene. Hence also hath come,

XIV.

The great Conformity and likenesse both

continued and increased of our Church to the Church of *Rome*, in vestures, postures, Ceremonies and Admiuistrations; namely, as the Bishops Rotchets, and Lawn sleeves, the four cornerd Cap, the Cope and Surplisse, the Tippit, the Hood, and the Canonicall Coat, the Pulpit clothed, especially now of late with the Jesuites badge upon them every way.

XV.

The standing up at *Gloria Patri*, and at the reading the Gospel, praying towards the East, bowing at the name of Jesus, the bowing to the Altar towards the East, Crosse in Baptisme kneeling at the Communion.

XVI.

The turning of the Communion Tables Altar-wise, setting Images, Crucifixes, and conceits over them, and Tapers and Books upon them, and bowing, and adoring to or before them, the reading of the second Service at the Altar, and forcing people to come up thither to receive, or else denying the Sacrament to them, tearming the Altar to be the Mercy-seat, or the place of God Almighty in the Church, which is a plain device to usher in the Masse.

XVII.

The Christening and Consecrating of Churches and Chappels, the Consecrating Fonts, Pulpits, Tables, Chalices, Churchyards,

yards, and many other things, and putting holineſſe in them; yea, reconſecratiug upon pretended pollution, as though every thing were unclean without their Conſecrating, and for want of this, ſundry Churches have been interdicted and kept from uſe as polluted.

XVIII.

The Liturgie for the moſt parts framed out of the Romiſh *Breviarie Ritualium* Maſſe-book, alſo the Book of Ordination, for Archbiſhops and Miniſters, framed out of the Roman Pontificall.

XIX.

The multitude of Canons formerly made, wherein, among other things, Excommunication, *ipſo facto*, is denounced for ſpeaking of a word againſt the devices abovesaid, or ſubſcription thereunto, though no Law enjoyned a reſtraint from the Miniſtry without ſuch ſubſcription and Appeale is denyed to any that ſhould refuſe ſubſcription or unlawfull conformity, though he never ſo much wronged by the inferiour Judge, alſo the Canons made in the late Sacred Synod, as they call it: wherein are many ſtrange and dangerous devices to undermine the Goſpel, and the Subiects liberties, to propagate Poperie to ſpoile Gods people, inſnare Miniſters & other *Students*, and ſo to draw all into an abſolute ſubiection and thraldome to them and their government, ſpoiling both the King and the Parliament of their power.

XX.

The countenancing pluriality of Benefices, prohibiting of Marriages without their lycenſe at certain times, almoſt half the yeare and lycenſing of Marriages without Banes asking.

XXI.

Prophanation of the Lords day pleading for it, and enioyning Miniſters to read a *Declaration*, ſet forth, as it is thought, by their procurement for tolerating of ſports upon that day, ſuſpending and depriving many godly miniſters for not reading the ſame onely out of Conſcience, it was againſt the Law of God ſo to doe, and no Law of the Land to enioyne it.

XXII.

The preſſing of the ſtrict obſervation of Saints Dayes, whereby great ſummes of Moneys are drawn out of Mens purſes for working on them, a very high burthen on moſt people, who getting their living by their daily imploiments, muſt either omit them and be idle, or part with their money, whereby many poor families are undone, or brought behinde hand, yea many *Church-Wardens* are ſued, or threatned to be ſued by their trouble ſome Miniſters, as perſuaded perſons for not preſenting their pariſhioners who failed in obſerving *Holy dayes*.

XXIII.

The great increaſe and frequencie of whoredomes,

domes and Adulteries, occasioned by the *Prelates* Corrupt administration of iustice, in such Cases, who taking upon them the punishment of it, doe turn all into moneyes for the filling of their purses, and lest their Officers should defraud them of their gain, they have in their late Canon, in stead of remedying their vices, decreed that the *Commutation* of Penance, shall not be without the Bishops privity.

XXIV.

The generall abuse of that great ordinance of Excommunication, which GOD hath left in his Church to be used as the last and greatest punishment the Church can inflict upon obstinate and great offenders, and that the Prelates and their officers, who of right, have nothing to doe with it, doe daily excommunicate men either for doing that which is lawfull, or for vain idle and triviall matters, as working or opening a shop on a Holiday, for not appearing at every beck upon their summons, not paying a fee or the like, yea they have made it, as they do all other things, a hook or instrument wherewith to empty mens purses, and to advance their own greatnesse, and so that sacred ordinance of God, by their perverting of it becomes contemptible to all men, and seldome or never used against notorious offenders, who, for the most part, are their favorites.

XXV.

Yea further the pride and ambition of the

Prelates

Prelates being boundleſſe, unwilling to be ſubiect to either man or Lawes, they claime their Office and Juriſdiction to be *Iure divino*, exerciſe Eccleſiaſticall authority in their own names and Rights, and under their own Seals, and take upon them Temporall dignities, places, and offices in the Common-wealth, that they may ſway both ſwords.

XXVI.

Whence followes the taking Commiſſions in their own Courts and Conſiſtories, and where elſe they ſit in matters determinable of Right at Common Law, the putting of Miniſters upon Pariſhes, without the Patrons and peoples conſent.

XXVII.

The impoſing of Oathes of various and triviall Articles yearly upon Church-wardens, and Side-men, which without periury, unleſſe they fall at iarres continually with their Miniſters and Neighbours, and wholly neglect their owne calling.

XXVIII.

The exerciſing of the Oath *Ex Officio* and other proceedings by the way of *Inquiſition* reaching even to mens thoughts, the apprehending, and detaining of men by *Purſivants*, the frequent ſuſpending and depriving of Miniſters, fining and impriſoning of all ſorts of people, bringing up of mens houſes and ſtudyes, taking away mens Books, Letters, and other writings, ſeizing upon their Eſtates, removing them from

from their callings, ſeparating betweene them and their wives againſt both their wills, the reiection of prohibitions with threatnings and the doing of many other out-rages, to the utter infringing the Laws of the Realm, and the Subiects liberties, and arraigning of them and their families, and of Latter time, the Iudges of the Land are ſo awed with the power and greatneſſe of the Prelates, and other wayes promoted, that neither prohibition, *Habeas Corpus* or any other lawfull remedy can be had or take place for the diſtreſſed Subiects in moſt caſes, onely *Papiſts*, *Ieſuits*, *Prieſts*, and ſuch others as propagate Popery or *Arminianiſme* are contenanced, ſpared, and have much libertie, *and from hence followed among others theſe dangerous Conſequences*.

I.

FIrſt the generall hope and expectation of the *Romiſh* part, *that their ſuperſtitious Religion will ere long be fully planted in this Kingdom again, and ſo they are encouraged to perſiſt therein, and to practice the ſame openly in divers places, to the high diſhonour of God, and contrary to the Laws of the Realme*.

II.

Secondly, the diſcouragement & deſtruction of all good Subiects, of whom all Multitudes both *Clothiers*, *Merchants*, and others being deprived of their Miniſters, & over burthend with theſe preſſures, have departed the Kingdome to *Holland* & other parts, & have drawn with them a great part of manufacture of *Cloth* and *Trading*

out

out of the Land into other places, where they reside, whereby wooll, the great staple of the Kingdom, is become of small value and vends not; Trading is decayed, many poor people want work, Sea-men lose imployment, and the whole Land much impoverished, to the great dishonour of this Kingdom, and blemishment to the government thereof.

III.

The present wars and commotions happned between his Majestie & his subiects of *Scotland*, wherein his Majestie and all his Kingdom are indangered, and suffer greatly, and are like to become a prey to the common Enemy, in case the wars go on, which we exceedingly fear, will not onely go on, but also increase to an utter Ruine of all, unlesse the Prelates with their dependancies be removed out of *England*, and also they and their practises, who, as we, under your Honours favour, do verily beleeve and conceive have occasioned the Quarrell.

All which we humbly refer to the consideration of this Honourable Assembly, desiring the Lord of Heaven to direct you in the right way to redresse all these evils.

FINIS.